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Applicant(s)::

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#### Abstract

PURPOSE: To prevent an electrode from burning and to prolong the service life of a nozzle by providing a clearance between an insertion hole of the electrode and the electrode and making the clearance a duct of working gas.

CONSTITUTION:Plural peripheral grooves 4 are provided in the longitudinal direction to an inwall of the insertion hole 3 where the electrode 2 of a torch main body 1 is loaded. Then, these peripheral grooves are used as the ducts of the working gas supplied from a pipe 5 and the working gas is blown out along the periphery of the electrode 2. Accordingly, since the electrode 2 is kept in a cooled state at all times, the abnormal temperature-up is controlled and the electrode 2 can be prevented from burning even if it is used for hours continuously. As a result, the stable plasma spraying is always performed and the service life of the nozzle can be prolonged to about five times longer than the usual one.

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⑨日本国特許庁(JP)

⑩特許出願公開

# ⑩ 公 開 特 許 公 報 (A) 昭62 - 240170

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審査請求 未請求 発明の数 1 (全7頁)

毎発明の名称 トーチ

②特 願 昭61-84835

**愛出** 願 昭61(1986)4月11日

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#### 明相音

1 発明の名称

トーチ

#### 2 特許請求の範囲

- 1. プラズマ切断装置において、トーチ本体に 設けられた電極棒を装塡する挿入孔と、接電 極棒との間にプラズマ化させるべき作動ガス の液路としての間隙を設けたことを特徴とす るトーチ。
- 2. 間除は、挿入孔の内壁に設けられた溝によって構成されるものである特許請求の範閉第 1項記載のトーチ。
- 3. 間隙は、電極掛の外壁に設けられた溝によって構成されるものである特許確求の範囲外 1 項記載のトーチ。
- 4. 間陸は、挿入孔及び電極棒に設けられた海 によって構成されるものである特許請求の範 明第1項記載の1-チ。

#### 3 発明の詳細な説明

(a) 産業上の利用分野

本発明は、プラズマ切断機における切断用トーチの改良に関するものである。

#### (1) 従来の技術

従来、プラズマ切断には作動ガスとして変素や アルゴンなどが使用されていたが、これらは高価 であることと維持・管理に手間がかかり、また、 ガス圧の設定や作業電波の設定を微妙に調整しな ければならず、かなりの熟練が必要であった。

この点に魅み、近時作動ガスとして圧縮エアーを利用したプラズマ切断装置が開発され、作業性、の飛躍的な向上が図れるようになった。このエアープラズマ切断機は、厚物の切断が出来ないものの(20 ==程度以上)一般的に利用されているエアーコンプレッサーを作動ガスの供給源としているので安全であるし、取り扱いが帳めて容易となる利点がある。とりわけ、建築金物に利用される高物のステンレス鋼・アルミニウム・更緯或いは自

動車用の鉄板などの切断には、切断幅が小さくて ドロスの発生が少なく、また、被工作物の熱収縮 が小さいので、歪がほとんど発生せず好適である。 勿論、この他板金やプレス加工後の後処理や異様 の金属を組み合わせたものの切断などあらゆる金 属の孔開けや切断加工の分野において極めて手軽 に使用することができ、その用途は著しく広い。

・・・ は、極めて高温のプラズマを発生すること・・・ トーチのヘッド部分を冷却する必要があった。 かいた かかれを循環させる水冷方式のものから がっか ガスとしての圧縮エアーを冷却に利用した こくりよのものがある。

・ 全明が解次しようとする問題点 ・ し、エアープラズマ切断は前述した如く種 本の冷却方法を採り入れることにより連続使用可能としているものの、現実には稼働率が約40~50 %に過ぎないものであった。つまり、切断作業時において、ノズルが高温度のプラズマを暗射するときの熱及び被加工物からの反射熱さららにはあり、その作品が徐々に挽損するため、頻繁に作業を休止して冷却しなければならないからである。特に、厚物を切断する場合にはスパックーやドロスで、フェで挽損することがあった。

このため、本発明者はノズルのブラズマ暗山孔の間口部に四次等の凹部を設けたり、ノズルの先端部分に斜面を形成し、この部分にブラズマ暗出孔の間口部を位置させる等の改良を行なった。この結果、プラズマ暗山孔がスパッター等の付寄により塞がれるのを防止すると共に被加工物からの熱の吸収をも抑えることが可能となり、作業能率の飛躍的な向上が図れることとなった。そして、さらにトーチの先端部分を買う保護キャップにも

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び動がスを循環させるなど、トーチの冷却方法を が高したことにより実質的な稼働率を90%以上ま で回じさせるに至った。

#### (d) 問題を解決するための手段

そこで本発明者は鋭意研究の結果、電極棒を装 続するトーチ本体の挿入孔と該電極棒との間に間 脓を設け、この間隙を作動ガスの波路としたトーチを開発した。つまり、本発明に係るトーチは電低棒の外周部をプラスマ化させる作動ガスの渡路としたことにより、電幅棒のみならずトーチ内部の昇温を抑制し、ひいてはトーチ全体の冷却効果を高めることを最大の目的としたものである。

本発明に係るトーチは、最も高温を発生する部位である電極棒さらにはトーチ内部の冷却を行なわしめることを目的としたものであって、トーチ全体の昇温抑制作用及びプラズマの安定噴出を図ることを可能としたものである。

#### (1) 実施例

以下、本発明を図面に示す実施例に基づいて詳 概に説明する。

従来のトーチ本体(II) は第2回に示すように電極格(2)の挿入孔(3)の周りに複数の孔(6)…を設ける

ことによってパイプのからの作動ガスの流略とし ていたが、これは単なる作動ガスの通り路でしか 過ぎないものであって、電桶棒22には何等の影響 も及ぼさないものであった。従って、本発明に係 るトーチ本体(1)を用いることにより、第3図に示 すように作動ガスが電極棒四の周囲に沿って流れ ることとなるので、電極棒似が常時冷却されてい る状態を保つことが可能となった。また、従来の トーチ本体(1) に設けた孔(6)…は約4個程度設け たに過ぎず、しかもその径が約りし畑程度であっ たものを本実施例のようにその数を2倍の8個と・ し、凡つ径をφ1.5 m程度に大きくしたことによ って、磁極棒四の冷却はもとよりトーチ(T)全 体の冷却効果も飛瀾的に向上させることができる 結果となった。尚、図中(10)はノズル、(11)は保 護キャップ、 (12) はパッフルである。

本実施例に示す電極棒四は、木体胴部のの両端 に電極部分を設けたものであって、一方が消耗し ても、ひっくり返して装塡することにより、もう 一方の電極部分が新たに使用できるようにしてい

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尚、電極棒型の形状は本実施例に限定するものではなく、第4 図に示すように電極部分を一方にのみ設けたものでも当然よい。この場合においても作動ガスと接触する面積を大きくするためにはできるだけ長くした方が好ましい。

第5回は本発明の他の実施例を示すもので、挿

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入孔(3)の問題には螺旋状の周溝(4)を設けたものである。これも前実施例と同様に電極棒(2)の周囲に沿って作動ガスが旋れることとなって、同等の冷却効果を得ることが可能となる。

電極棒四及び挿入孔間の両方に満等を設ける場合には、一方を円周方向に設ければ他方を経済や 鍵旋満とすることによって作動ガスの旋路とすれ ばよいが、例えば第9図に示すようにすれば両者 共円周方向に設けても作動ガスの波路を形成する ことが可能となる。

第10図は本発明のさらに他の実施例を示すもので、挿入孔間には周衛伯…を設けずに電極権②のみに溝(6)…を設けて作動がスの流路としたものである。この場合においても突部(9)がフィンの役目をすることとなるため、前述した実施例と実質的にほぼ同一の効果を有する。また、満個…は経満だけでなく雙度満としてもよく、要は作動がスの流路としての機能を有するものであればよい。

第11図は本発明のさらに他の実施例を示すもので、作動がスの流路としての間隙を形成するべく様人孔(3)の内壁に突起(13)を設けたものである。この突起(13)によって間隙を形成するという意味においては第12図に示すように電極棒(2)の期部のに突起(13)を設けるようにしてもよい。勿論、電極棒(2)と挿入孔(3)の両者に突起(13)…を設けるようにしてもよく、突起(13)と間溝(4)或いは溝(8)とを紹み合わせるようにしてもよい。

#### 4 図面の簡単な説明

会議が発展機能では、新算等

第1図は本発明に係るトーチにおけるトーチ本体の一実施例を示す斜視図、第2図はトーチ本体の世末例を示す斜視図、第3図は本発明に係発明に係来例を示す斜視図、第3図は本発明に係発明の他の実施例を示す断面図、第6図乃至第2図の表の関のさらに他の実施例を示す斜視図、第10図はトーチ本体のさらに他の実施例を示す・部を切り欠いた斜視図、第12図はを示す・部を切り欠いた斜視図、第12図は後極極のさらに他の実施例を示す斜視図である。

T ... .. 1 - 4

1 ……トーチ末体

2 … … 電橋棒

3 …… 挿入孔

4 … … 周溝

5 ……パイプ

6 ··· ··· FL

(6) 発明の効果

以上のように本発明に係るトーチは、電極棒の。 周囲に沿って作動ガスを供給させる構造としたこ とにより、電極棒の異常な昇温を抑制することが 可能となった。従って、長時間連続して作業を行 っても電極棒が焼けることなり、常に安定したプ ラズマを噴射できるので、被加工物の切断而が荒 れることなく後加工にかける手間を大幅に削減す ることが可能となった。木発明者の行なった実験 によっても電極棒の先嶋郎は従来では皿穴状に広 がっていたものが、本発明品を使用することによっ って、その先端部の穴が極めて小さくなると共に プラズマが常に集中して発射でき、しかも電極棒 の寿命が延びるという良好な結果が得られた。そ してさらには、トーチ内部の昇温をも抑制するこ とからトーチ全体の冷却効果を高めることができ る結果、ノズルの寿命も従来のものより約5倍に もなるという極めて存益な効果を有するものであ る.

1 2

7 …… 胴部

8 … … 稿

9 ……突部

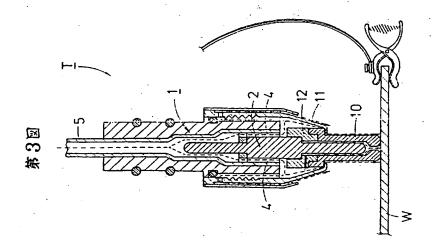
13……奥起

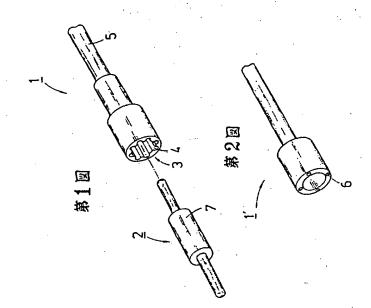
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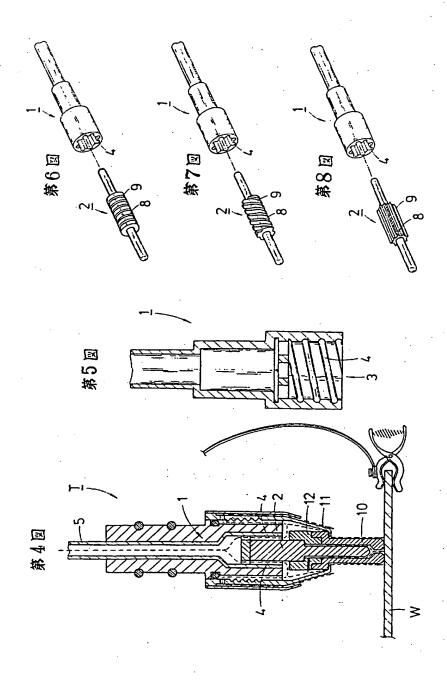
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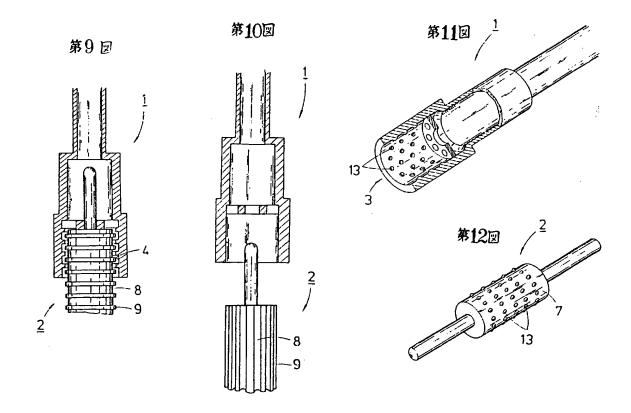
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(54) Title of Invention:

Torch

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(22) Date of Application:

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(74) Agent: Hisaki Nagata, Patent Attorney

#### **SPECIFICATIONS**

#### 1 Title of Invention

Torch

#### 2 Claims

- 1. A torch for a plasma cutter, which has the following characteristic features. A gap is created between the bore in the torch main body for inserting an electrode and the said electrode. The gap is used as the flow path of a working gas which is to be transformed to a plasma.
- 2. The torch described in Claim 1, in which the gap is created by grooves made on the inner surface of the electrode insertion bore.
- 3. The torch described in Claim 1, in which the gap is created by grooves made on the outer surface of the electrode.
- 4. The torch described in Claim 1, in which the gap is created by grooves made on the surfaces of the insertion bore and the electrode.

# 3 Detailed Description of Invention

## (a) Technical Area of Invention

This invention pertains to the improvements of a cutting torch in a plasma cutter.

# (b) Existing Technology

In the conventional plasma cutting, however, a gas such as nitrogen and argon has been used as the working gas, but these gases are expensive and the use of these gases requires careful maintenance and control as well as considerable skills for delicate adjustments in setting the gas pressure and the working current.

To resolve such difficulties, a plasma cutter utilizing compressed air as the working gas was recently developed and the operating efficiency was greatly improved. That is, while such air plasma cutter is incapable of cutting thick (more than about 20 mm) pieces, it uses a common air compressor as the source of the working gas, making its handling much simpler. Therefore, it is particularly well suited for cutting thin pieces of stainless steel, aluminum, and brass used for building hardwares and steel plates used for automobiles because it yields the small cutting width, the reduced dross and little thermal contraction of work pieces. The air plasma cutter can be used quite handily in all areas involving boring or cutting of metals including post heat treatment of press worked sheet metals and cutting of pieces made of two different metals. Therefore, its uses are enormous.

One of the characteristic features of the air plasma cutting process is its capability of sharp and precise cutting with a very small cutting width, thus minimizing the post cutting treatment. Therefore, attempts have been made to construct the torch head, the tip of the nozzle in particular, as slender as possible so that the cutting operations can be made visually observing the cutting points.

In addition, in the plasma cutting, the extremely hot plasma is generated and the torch head must be cooled. There are two types of systems for such cooling; the water-cooling type in which cooling water is circulated in the nozzle or the air-cooling type in which part of compressed air supplied as the working gas is used for cooling.

## (c) Problems To Be Resolved by Invention

The air plasma cutting, as described above, withstands a long, continuous operation when one of the cooling methods is adopted. In practice, however, its rate of operation is only 40 - 50 %. That is, during the cutting operation, the nozzle tip is gradually burned because of the heat of injection of the high temperature plasma, the heat reflected from the work piece, and the deposit of melted dross and spatters, and thus the operation must be interrupted frequently for cooling. When cutting a thick piece in particular, the deposit of the spatters and the dross are so severe that the burning takes place not only in the nozzle but also in the cap protecting the nozzle.

To resolve such problems, the inventor of this patent has made various improvements such as providing recesses such as countersinks on the plasma injection opening of the nozzle or forming a tapered surface near the nozzle tip to place the plasma injection opening at this portion. With these improvements, it became possible to prevent the clogging of the plasma injection opening due to the deposit of spatters and to reduce the absorption of the heat reflected from the work piece, and the operation efficiency was increased greatly. In addition, by improving the torch cooling method with the circulation of the working gas in the protection cap covering the torch tip, the operation rate in practice was increased to 90 % or higher.

These improvements, however, are all made within the nozzle of the torch or its protection cap, and the torch is still far from perfect. That is, the torch interior where the plasma is generated remains at a high temperature, resulting in a shortcoming that the proper plasma is not generated and subtle changes in the cutting conditions occur.

Another shortcoming is that, after a long operation, the plasma generated near the tip of the electrode loses its stability in concentration and scatters around, reducing the life of the tip and adversely affecting the nozzle.

# (d) Means for Resolving Problems

The inventor of the present patent, after long and dedicated efforts, has successfully developed a torch in which a gap is created between the electrode inserting bore in the torch main body and the electrode, and this gap is used as the flow path for the working gas. In other words, the primary objective of the torch of this invention is to control the temperature increase of the electrode and the torch interior and thus to increase the cooling efficiency of the entire torch.

Note that, in the present specifications, the torch main body designates the torch assembly consisting of the electrode, the baffle, the nozzle, and the protecting cap. The torch assembly is equipped with the flow path for the working gas supplied from the working gas source. It may be electrically conductive so as to also function as the current lead wire to the electrode or alternatively an electrical connection may be separately provided. The gap designates the spaces created by the grooves or the protrusions provided on the outer surface of the electrode and/or on the inner surface of the electrode insertion bore. The working gas designates the gas which is injected as the plasma for cutting work pieces. Compressed air, nitrogen, and argon are among such working gases.

## (e) Effects

The torch of this invention is intended for cooling the electrode, where the highest temperature is generated, and the torch interior. With this invention, the control of the temperature elevation of the entire torch and the stable injection of the plasma became possible.

#### (f) Embodiments of Invention

In the following, the torch of this invention is explained in detail referring to its embodiments illustrated in the drawings.

Figure 1 is a sketch of an embodiment of the torch main body (1) in the torch (T) of the present invention. Multiple longitudinal grooves (4) are provided on the inner wall of the electrode (2) inserting bore (3) to create the gap used as the flow path for the working gas. The working gas supplied from the pipe (5) is injected along the outer surface of electrode (2) inserted in the bore (3) with these grooves (4) as its flow path.

In the conventional torch main body (1') shown in Fig. 2, multiple longitudinal holes (6) are provided in the wall of the electrode (2) insertion bore (3) as the flow path for the working gas supplied from the pipe (5). These holes (6), however, merely serve as the flow paths for the working gas, and have no influence on the electrode (2) at all. In the torch main body (1) of the present invention, on the other hand, the electrode (2) can be constantly being cooled because the working gas flows along the outer surface of the electrode (2), as shown in Fig. 3. The number of the holes (6) in the wall of the conventional torch main body (1') is only about four, and diameter of these holes is about 1 mm. In the embodiment of the present invention, the number of the grooves (4) is doubled to eight, and the diameter is increased to about 1.5 mm, thus yielding the greatly improved cooling effect not only for the electrode (2) but also for the entire torch (T). In Fig. 3, (10) is the nozzle, (11) is the protecting cap, and (12) is the

baffle.

In this embodiment, the electric poles are provided at the both ends of the main body (7) of the electrode (2), and when the pole at one end is consumed, the electrode (2) is turned upside down to provide a fresh pole. The pole portions are longer than those of the conventional electrode so as to be fitted in the slender nozzle (10). The slender nozzle (10) is suited for cutting to be made in a tight spot or cutting a work piece made of a corrugated sheet. Also the heat from the cutting zone does not remain stagnant, and the heat is not readily transferred by conduction to the entire torch (T). The better visibility at the cutting point is beneficial in most cutting operations. When the electrode (2) with the long poles at both ends is used in the conventional torch main body (1'), it cannot be inserted without cutting off one of the poles. In the torch (T) of this invention, the depth of the electrode insertion bore (3) in the torch main body (1) is increased so that even such longer electrode (2) can be inserted as readily as the conventional short electrode.

The shape of the electrode (2) is not limited to that of this embodiment. The electrode with the pole at one end only, as shown in Fig. 4, may be used. Even for such electrode, the longer, the better to increase the surface area in contact with the working gas.

Figure 5 shows an alternative embodiment of this invention in which a spiral circumferential groove (4) is provided on the inner wall of the electrode insertion bore (3). As in the case of the first embodiment, the working gas flows along the outer surface of the electrode (2), resulting in the same degree of cooling effect.

Here, to improve the cooling effect further, multiple circumferential grooves (8) are made on the main body (7) of the electrode (2), as shown in Fig. 6. That is, the ridges (9) formed between the grooves (8) function as fins to increase the heat radiation effect of the electrode (2), and the surface area in contact with the working gas is also increased. In addition, the longitudinal grooves (4) on the inner wall of the bore (3) and the circumferential grooves (8) on the electrode are arranged perpendicular to each other, and the working gas remains in these spaces. Thus the cooling effect is further increased. The circumferential grooves (8) may be replaced by a spiral groove like a screw thread, as shown in Fig. 7, or by the longitudinal grooves, as shown in Fig. 8. The same degree of cooling effect is obtained from any of them.

When the grooves are made on both the electrode (2) and the bore (3), it may be preferable to make one of them circumferential and the other longitudinal or spiral as the path of the working gas. However, if it is constructed as shown in Fig. 9, the grooves on the both surfaces may be circumferential to provide the flow path for the working gas.

Figure 10 illustrates other alternative embodiment of this invention, in which no circumferential grooves (4) are made on the inner wall of the bore (3) and the longitudinal grooves (8) are made on the electrode (2) only as the flow path for the working gas. In this embodiment, the ridges (9) again function as fins, and essentially the same degree of cooling effect as that of the preceding embodiment is obtained. The longitudinal grooves (8) may be replaced by a spiral groove. Any grooves which can fuction as the flow path for the working gas may be used.

Figure 11 illustrates still other alternative embodiment of this invention, in which the protrusions are made on the inner wall of the electrode insertion bore (3) to create the gap as the flow path for the working gas. To create the gap with protrusions (13), the

protrusions (13) may be made on the surface of the main body (7) of the electrode (2). Of course, the protrusions (13) may be made on both the electrode (2) and the bore (3), or the protrusions (13) may be combined with the circumferential grooves (4) or the longitudinal grooves (8).

# (g) Merits of Invention

As described above, the torch of the present invention is constructed in such a way that the working gas is supplied along the outer surface of the electrode, making it possible to control the abnormal temperature elevation of the electrode. Therefore, its long sustained operation does not cause the burning of the electrode, and torch always injects the stable plasma. The roughening of cutting faces of the work piece is thus largely eliminated and the time-consuming post-cutting treatment is greatly reduced. The good results were obtained in the experiments conducted by the inventor. That is, conventionally the opening ahead of the electrode widens toward the tip in the shape of a countersink. In the torch of this invention, a very small opening at the tip can be used for consistently injecting concentrated plasma, and the life of the electrode is extended. In addition, the cooling effect for the entire torch can be increased by controlling the temperature elevation of the torch interior also, and consequently the life of the nozzle is extended to about five times that of the conventional nozzle.

# 4 Brief Description of Figures

Figure 1 is a sketch of one embodiment of the torch main body in the torch of the present invention; Fig. 2 is a sketch of the torch main body in a conventional torch; Fig. 3 is a longitudinal section of the torch of the present invention in operating condition; Fig. 4 is a longitudinal section of an alternative embodiment of this invention; Fig. 5 is a longitudinal section of an alternative embodiment of the torch main body; Figs. 6 through 8 are sketches of additional alternative embodiments of this invention; Figs. 9 and 10 are longitudinal sections of more alternative embodiments; Fig. 11 is a broken-out view of still other alternative embodiment of the torch main body; and Fig. 12 is a sketch of still other alternative embodiment of the electrode.

T --- torch
1 --- torch main body
2 --- electrode
3 --- electrode insertion bore
5 --- pipe
6 --- hole
7 --- electrode main body
9 --- ridge
13 --- protrusion

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